

Abstract

This thesis deals with Czechoslovak penal system between the years 1948 – 1989 from the view of religion. It investigates the development of spiritual service in prison, follows its decline after February 1948 and describes in which way the prisoners tried to find a solution to the prohibition to practice religion in prisons. Further it focuses on religious persecution in communist Czechoslovakia, presents reasons for imprisonment of the members of individual confessions and shows how their faith reflected in everyday life in prison.

The author makes a reference to the concentration of priests in closed departments, explains its reason and tries to depict everyday life of these separated communities. He describes in details how the convicted practiced the acts of their religion and he deals with the differences of individual confessions.

The work speculates over the sense of imprisonment of hundreds of priests, friars and laymen from some of the Churches in communist Czechoslovakia. It thinks about the power of faith and conviction exposed to cruel physical treatment and mental violence. It also deals with the question of collaboration, relations between members of different confession and between the convicted and warders. In the end it depicts how the people with religious belief, who were imprisoned in communist prisons and labour camps evaluate their experience and its results for their further life and activity.